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DEPARTMENT PASS TO USTR  
DEPARTMENT FOR EEB/TPP/ABT  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOR FAS - ELIZABETH JONES

E.O. 12958: N/A  
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SUBJECT: ITALIANS TO VOTE "NO" AT FEB 12 VOTE ON BIOTECH  
CORN, SOYBEANS, AND COTTON

REF: STATE 13142

11. (U) On February 11, Embassy Rome's Minister-Counselor for Agricultural Affairs delivered reftel points on EU approval of biotech corn, cotton, and soybean varieties to contacts at the ministries of Health and Agriculture. Director General Romano Marabelli of the Ministry of Health and Diplomatic Advisor Georgio Starace in the Ministry of Agriculture said the GOI will vote against the approval of the biotech crops being considered, and noted that these votes are consistent with previous Italian votes on biotech approvals. In explaining the GOI vote, both officials noted that since the late-January collapse of the Prodi government, Italy is being administered by a caretaker government, and that the caretaker government is not in a position to change GOI policy on this issue.  
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